6 Vets Indicted in Convention Plot

Post 7-15-72

By William Cotterell

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., July 14 (UPI) — Six members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War were indicted by a federal grand jury today on charges of conspiring to cause riots during the Republican National Convention with fire bombs, automatic weapons and slingshot-propelled fireworks.

Scott Camil of Gainsville, the Florida chairman of VVAW, was among the six indicted on the conspiracy charge. He also was indicted on one count of manufacturing and possessing a firebomb and one count of instructing others in how to use explosives.

The six indicted on conspiracy charges were Camil, John W. Kniffen of Austin, Tex., William J. Patterson of El Paso, Tex., Peter P. Mahoney of New York, Alton C. Foss of Hialeah, Fla., and Donald P. Perdue of Gainesville, Fla.

If convicted on all three counts, Camil could be sent to prison for 20 years and fined $30,000. The other five, indicted only on the conspiracy charge, could receive a maximum of five years and a $10,000 fine.

U.S. Attorney William Stafford said Camil, Kniffen and Mahoney were being held under $25,000 bond at the Leon County jail, and that Foss was taken into custody by a U.S. marshal in Miami. He said Patterson and Perdue were not yet in custody.

The indictment said, "It was the part of the said conspiracy that the defendants and the individual co-conspirators would organize numerous 'fire teams' to attack with automatic weapons fire and incendiary devices police stations, police cars and stores in Miami Beach, Fla., on various dates between Aug. 21 and 24, 1972" — the dates of the Republican convention.

It listed 15 "overt acts" by various defendants, claiming that the out-of-state VVAW members crossed state borders to take part in a conspiracy. The indictment said the antiwar veterans plotted to arm themselves with "wrist rocket" slingshots that would fire "lead weights, 'fried' marbles, ball bearings, 'cherry' bombs and smoke bombs at police . . . ."

Grand Jury Called 23 Activists

It also said Camil stocked up on the "wrist rocket" slingshots in preparation for the convention.

The grand jury last Monday subpoenaed 23 VVAW activists to appear in Tallahassee and testify on then-undisclosed matters.

Throughout the week of secrecy, the VVAW members maintained that the government was only trying to keep them away from the Democratic National Convention in Miami Beach.

The indictmemt said Camil taught VVAW members, including Patterson and Mahoney, how to use firebombs during a planning session at his home in Gainesville May 27. The second count of the indivtment charged Camil with possessing a firebomb made of potassium permanganate.

The third count in the indictment charged Camil with the others of conspiring "on or about April 1" to violently disrupt the Republican convention.

Four other VVAW members were jailed Thursday night on orders of U.S. District Judge David L. Middlebrooks for contempt after they refused to testify before the grand jury.

Grand Jury Indicts Six Antiwar Vets

AP Post 7-15-72

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A federal grand jury indicted six antiwar veterans today on charges of conspiring to disrupt next month's Republican National Convention in Miami Beach with guns, bombs and other forms of violence.

The grand jury completed a weeklong probe by accusing the six members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) of plotting to "maliciously damage and destroy by means of explosive devises buildings and persons" at the Aug. 21-24 convention.

Indicted were Don Purdue, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Peter Mahoney, New York City; John Kniffer, Texas; William Patterson, Texas; Alton Foss, Miami and Scott Camil, Gainesville, Fla.

Asst. U.S. Atty. Jack Carrouth said those under indictment, who are all among the original 23 antiwar vets called here this week, will be brought before a committing magistrate sometime today for the purpose of setting bonds. He said the conspiracy charges each carry maximum penalties of five years imprisonment.

A Legal Defense Fund spokesman, Judy Peterson of Gainesville, said earlier that the alleged conspiracy charges also involved plans for the just-concluded Democrat convention, but the only mention in the indictments was events allegedly planned for "Aug. 21-28 in Miami Beach."